

THE FABLE OF ONE OF LIFE'S AMATEURS

By John Held



Once upon a time there was a boy who could lick his weight in wildcats.



As he grew older he beat up all the stevedores.



The bigger the cop the better he liked it.



One day he whipped the welterweight champ in a street fight.



Then they matched him in the ring, where an ancient pro hypnotized him with a look. Moral: Experience will be served.

PESTS! NO OTHER PLACE ON EARTH HAS THEM IN SUCH VARIETY

By JANE DIXON.

HOW is it, think you, no sharp-witted scrivener up to now has written a couple of volumes on "Pests I Have Known In and About New York"? Such a fertile field for fancy! Such an opportunity for scattering superlatives! If there be a Voltaire among you, let him rise up and romp forth on a subject already too long neglected.

Those who have made a business of globe trotting assert without reserve New York leads the world in the va-

rious you will issue forth some time to find your car full of mysterious flat tires. There will be rattles where rattles never were before, and strange squeaks and inexplicable disappearances.

The volunteer charge d'auto pest is of two varieties. First and most obnoxious is the man size sort with the slovenly clothes and the nose like unto a rare ripe tomato. Before the invasion of the automobile he used to walk up beside you and confidentially inquire if you would see a poor man starve for the want of a nickel to buy a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Now

Not Only Is That True of New York, but It Is Here, Too, That They Reach the Perfection of Pestiferousness--Some Notes on the Habits of the "Table Hopper"

when this hungry mob has finished playing with the various plugs and pedals the car will be a total wreck. Also you know if you attempt to shoo them away the playing will go on all the more fiercely once your back is turned.

Now and again you will be approached by a small boy who looks you straight in the eye and puts the proposition of watching your car up to you squarely. Give him a job. You can bank on it he will take the change home to his mother. He is a regular wage earner in embryo and the watching fee may mean meat for an entire family to-morrow.

Another form of automobile pest has developed in the wake of the street car strike. This is the person who stands in the middle of the road and cries loudly to be taken into a passing motor. The way he figures it the

world owes him a ride and he is right in there collecting.

A man who motors down from up Westchester way asserts that any morning he is in a hurry he can count on being stopped at least fifty times. If he acceded to all demands what is now a really attractive automobile would resemble an old army transport. When he refuses to allow the pests to straddle the hood and drape themselves over the top they wax abusive and shout about the world's wealth being divided all wrong. Many of them will doubtless become nihilists and connive to have all automobiles converted into red flannel shirts.

Agent boy pests, why does not some organization interested in the making of men give time and attention to the "newsies" who follow folks for blocks whining through their noses like hardened beggars. To all outward appear-

ances they are asking alms for the Newsboys Home. The suggestion may be out of order, but if you wish to contribute to the upkeep of the Newsboys Home would it not be wiser to mail the contribution directly to the head of the institution?

Among the most persistent of the present day pests are the "table hoppers." The coppers infest restaurants where they make life miserable for patrons by pinning themselves on a party for anything from a drink to an evening's entertainment.

Many hoppers of both sexes earn a precarious livelihood by this noxious business. The plan of procedure is to get all dressed up like a parade and then breeze into a restaurant where they are sure to meet people they know. A nod of recognition. The hopper stops to speak a word of greeting, to ask a phony question. The

next thing you know the waiter is taking the order. If things fail to look promising at that table the hopper sees some one at another and the trick is repeated until something good turns up.

The table hopping pest has no shame. Men or women, they have been insulted by experts and the ordinary hint of polite society passes over their heads like a German Zeppelin dropping paper mache bombs. They have one purpose in life and only one—to snatch free liquid refreshment here and there, to ease in on a luncheon or dinner or supper without having to bother about the check.

Another restaurant pest worthy of extermination by fair means or foul is the fellow who knows all about the war and insists on fighting it out right then and there. You come in and select a side table with the one person worth while. You are all set for a quiet dinner, with maybe a game of eyes across the table and plenty of those eloquent silences so replete with thrills.

Scarcely are you settled when the war breaks out. A man with a bass voice talks himself red in the face trying to persuade a man with a tenor voice that so far as the Kaiser goes everything is over but the shouting. The tenor voice person grows pale and glassy eyed in his effort to prove to the basso profundo how the Allies can tie one hand behind them and still win the war in a walk. Dishes rattle, silver drops to the floor, bottles and glasses are overturned in the fury of the word fight. Anxious waiters hover in the office, ready to sail in and separate the combatants should they actually clinch.

By the time you reach dessert and the verge of nervous prostration the battle is drowned in the flowing bowl, peace has been declared and all that is left for you is the wreck of what might have been a perfect evening. You decide the next time you want to dine quietly with the One Best Bet you will have the table laid in the middle of Times Square along about theatre time.

At this season of the year it is well to keep a keen lookout for the coming of coons of yours who are trundled in from the districts where elderberry bushes and snake fences are found in great profusion. If you are awakened at the crack of dawn by a set of strangers bearing in one hand the well known telescope affected by rural travelers, and in the other the equally well known cotton umbrella, tell them you are the janitor or "tress" and that the family has gone to the South Sea Isles on a five year visit.

Otherwise you will be leading the strangers by the hand through the Aquarium. They will clamor to be well to keep a keen lookout for the coming of coons of yours who are trundled in from the districts where elderberry bushes and snake fences are found in great profusion. If you are awakened at the crack of dawn by a set of strangers bearing in one hand the well known telescope affected by rural travelers, and in the other the equally well known cotton umbrella, tell them you are the janitor or "tress" and that the family has gone to the South Sea Isles on a five year visit.

taken slumming on the East Side, and will be miserable until they have spent the better part of a day at Grant's Tomb. You will be called upon to point out the Waldorf-Astoria, the roof garden where Harry Thaw went gunning, and every time you pass a house on Fifth Avenue it will be up to you to say to which one of the Vanderbilts it belongs.

a simple dish of sliced peaches. Nothing stirring. The culinary crime must be committed, and is—to the eternal condemnation of gravy and cherry pie. "Have a new cocktail for you," cries the pest. "You want to get this one sure. Greatest little cocktail ever invented." "Guess I'll stick to a Bronx," you answer.



The heat and the sightseeing pest come together.



A peace party spoiled by the war pest.



The "Watch yer car?" pest.

rious and perfection of its pests. As a propagation ground for pests it has no equal. Let a new situation arise, and quicker than the lightning's flash there is a new brand of pest there to meet it.

For years free and otherwise untamed citizens have been compelled to leave that most precious of all their effects, their hats, in charge of strange human beings who return a battered fedora for a fresh Panama or a derby for a straw sailor as they please. In return for this compulsory service the hat's owner pays a fee as large as his bankroll allows. No one trying to sneak past the watchdogs of the checking privilege. Boys in uniform will follow to the uttermost parts of any place to gather a hidden hat and exact their tribute. They seem to be able to scent a hat for blocks and to take the trail straight to the chair beneath which it is concealed.

So much for hats. Men have come to accept this annoyance as one of the regular burdens of daily life. They part with their headgear without a whimper. Doubtless if we had measles all our lives we would come in time to not mind them.

Now to go on to the automobile pests! First and foremost is the voluntary guard who, the instant you drive up to a curb, springs out of the sidewalk like a dark weed out of the night, and insists on taking charge of the gasoline steed against your return. The truth is you do not want your car tended. You feel the thing is perfectly safe to take care of itself. You mention this to the pest, but he goes right on fumbling with the door and making obeisance just the same.

When it comes to a turnaround he is dead from the shoulders up. You give him an angry look, alight hastily and walk away with back bristling. That ought to squelch him all right.

Six minutes or six hours later you return to make a quick getaway. But the pest beats you to it. He comes loping toward goal from the swinging doors of the corner saloon, where he has been coaling up for the strenuous duties of his position; or he is slumbering peacefully with his head on your favorite robe and his feet propped against the glittering surface of the back seat enamel.

If you never expect to pass that way again you may drive merrily away, leaving the pest standing on the curbstone sans dime, sans quarter, sans half dollar, sans anything. The best he can do is to hurl maledictions at your departing head and consign your car to the seventeen punctures of furies.

On the contrary, if there is the remotest chance of the same pest meeting you again, dig down deep and hand over the hush money. Other-

he has a much better graft. Every little while he can buy a flock of beers instead of a measly single.

What are you going to do about it? Like as not he is a scout for a band of automobile thieves, and the next time you meet your car it will have changed its coat from cream to dark blue, with a New Jersey license to complete the disguise.

The second variety of pest is the small boy who swarms over the running board and chatters he must be left in charge. He is accompanied by a flock of small boys in various stages of unsanitariness. You feel certain that

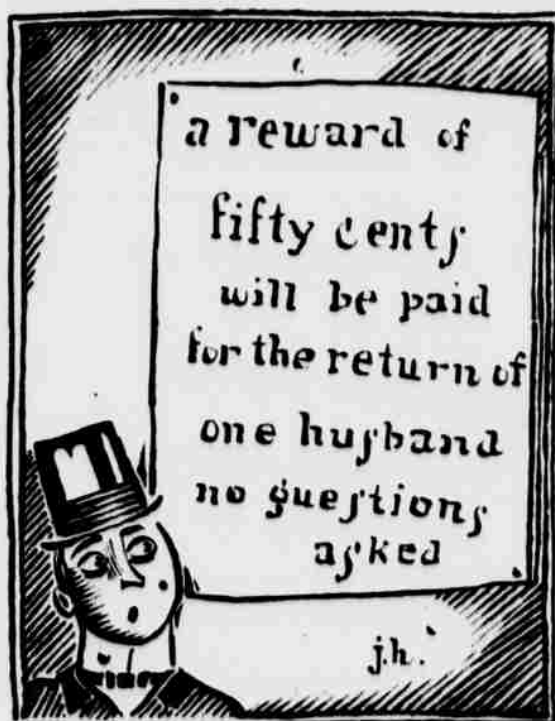
THE NEWS OF THE WEEK IN RHYME—By Dana Burnet

SIR HUGHES is riding to the joust
With verbal whip and rowel;
The Democrats are writing notes
Demanding disavowal.
A doctor thinks that seven drinks
Are rather more than plenty;
A savant said
One should not wed
Till one was four and twenty.

A daring fashion now obtains
Among the very wealthy—
They bathe without their summer furs,
Which really is not healthy.
Chain lightning struck a country place,
From which an oil well spouted;
Who says the farm
Has lost its charm?
And China's loan was flouted.

The capture of Gorizia
Was much appreciated.
The Irish Argument is still
Religiously debated.
Lord Rockefeller laughed in church,
Which pleased the congregation.
Results are slow
In Mexico,
And Hayti is a nation.

A Brooklyn husband left the wife
To whom the statutes bound him—
The lady offered fifty cents
To any one who found him.
An Indiana gentleman
Performed for fifty hours
Upon a flute
Of ill repute—
The neighbors all sent flowers.



The lady offered 50 cents.



The Kaiser kissed a regiment.

The Kaiser kissed a regiment
To pay it for its losses;
Can it be true that Wilhelm Two
Is short of Iron Crosses?
A scientist declares that war
Will cure appendicitis;
The paper trade
Is badly frayed,
And Villa tried to bite us.

An armor plated bathing suit
Was recently invented.
The Austrian defences are
Considerably dented.
The Czar pursues his westward way,
Although the pace is slower;
The stencilled gown
Has won renown—
And gasoline is lower.



The armor plated bathing suit.

"Not on your life," raves the pest. "Franco, listen closely. Put in the sharpest equal parts of ginger ale, absinthe and a crushed plum. Put the seed of the plum in the bottom of the glass. Fragrant, well-poured, let it we go. Bottoms up!"

When you have decided you have not been attacked by a German submarine after all, but have merely been persecuted by a pest, you place both hands high above your head and take the oath: never again!

Well to the fore of the pest list should be the man who buys himself a pair of spy glasses and operates them from a pier window. You might be surprised at the frequency with which he is seen, not only downtown in the hotel district, but up in the exclusive apartment house and residential sections as well. What joy he finds in obtaining himself into the privacy of perfectly strange people is a question without an answer. One of his variety operators from the gable window of a public school across the way almost every day. I have been told there is a certain sentence for this pest if he is caught. When they catch the one in the schoolhouse I hope the sentence will be nothing trivial.

The man or woman whose dancing resembles the playful posset of a full grown elephant are always with us. They are on their feet at the first scrape of the violin and then complain because the orchestra only played three measures.

"Oh, time a waste. I'm wild about a waltz. Hurry, let's not miss out of it!"

When the torture is over you are wild too, but not about the waltz. Then you hobble to the charapostol the next day. He tells you in time you may walk the same, but your feet will never look the same again.

Of course we are all well acquainted with the car order: the person who turns in the next chair while Carson is pouring out liquid smoke, the neighborly, tinkling, mauling, with the cracked voice that disintegrates every time we once loved, the "find me a hog," the villains who buy seats in the centre of the row at the theatre and drag themselves over us at every intermission. All these are the pests of New York.